

RECORD OF DECISION

for

USDA Forest Service

Final Environmental Impact Statement

SAN JUAN NATIONAL FOREST LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Archuleta, Conejos, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Mineral, Montezuma,
Rio Grande, San Juan and San Miguel Counties
Colorado

INTRODUCTION

This Record of Decision documents approval of the San Juan National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). The Forest Plan outlines a long-range program and establishes management requirements for natural resource management. It identifies management practices, their location on the Forest, and anticipated levels of production. It further provides for coordinated use of outdoor recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife, fish, and wilderness resources to provide a sustained yield of goods and services for the benefit of the American public. Cultural, visual, soil, and water resources are managed to protect them from significant or permanent impairment as well as to enhance other resource values.

Major features of the San Juan Forest Plan are outlined as follows:

- The Forest Plan (pages III-3 through III-6) identifies the desired future condition of the Forest, which is discussed in the context of goals. Goals are general in nature and timeless in that no specific dates of achievement are stated or implied. They form the basis for developing objectives (36 CFR 219.3).
- Management objectives (pages III-6 through III-9) are measurable output levels, achievement of which constitute a response to pre-established goals (36 CFR 219.3). Objectives are stated as outputs that could be produced or activities expected to take place within a specific period of time. They were developed through a systematic, interdisciplinary approach during formulation of alternatives. This process is summarized in the final Environmental Impact Statement (pages II-1 through II-6). Since achievement of objectives is contingent on many factors such as budget levels, changes in laws and regulations, and natural disasters, no guarantee is made that these objectives will necessarily be reached.
- The Forest Plan also establishes what are called management requirements which outline specific management practices as well as the intensity of practices needed to attain multiple use objectives and address issues and concerns. Management requirements in the Forest

Direction section (pages III-10 through III-84) establish the environmental quality requirements, natural and depletable resource requirements, and mitigation measures that apply to all areas of the Forest. Also, prescriptions are assigned to specific areas of land called management areas (36 CFR 219.11). The management requirements in the prescriptions for management areas (pages III-85 through III-291) are in addition to those contained in the Forest Direction. The locations of management areas are illustrated on the Forest Plan maps.

- The Plan establishes monitoring procedures to identify how well objectives of the Plan are being met. Monitoring procedures are set forth in Chapter IV of the Forest Plan.

- The Plan includes proposed schedules for implementation of Forest Service activities. Schedules are contained in Appendices A, B, C, and D of the Forest Plan. The Forest Supervisor has authority under the Forest Plan as well as under Federal Regulations [36 CFR 219.10(e)] to change the proposed implementation schedules to reflect differences between proposed and actual appropriated budget levels.

The Forest Plan establishes broad direction and makes no attempt to either anticipate or resolve every short-term problem or conflict that may arise in management of the Forest. A key feature is that it can be adjusted through rescheduling, amendment, or revision.

An environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared which describes proposed management and alternatives to the proposed action. The EIS describes the environment to be affected and discloses potential environmental consequences of implementing the proposed action and alternatives to that action. Preparation of an environmental impact statement is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); Council on Environmental Quality regulations found in Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 1500-1508 (40 CFR 1500-1508); and in the implementing regulations of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) found in Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 219 (36 CFR 219). Plan preparation was also guided by the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960.

The San Juan National Forest covers 1,867,282 acres in southwestern Colorado.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

In the initial phase of the planning process, public issues and management concerns were identified through a review of past public involvement efforts. Following the review, federal, state, and local agencies as well as the general public were asked to validate existing issues and define new issues. Public issues and management concerns were then used to establish the scope of the EIS (40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.25).

Public issues and management concerns were grouped according to similarity in content. From these groupings, twelve planning questions were developed that would be "answered" by the Forest Plan to resolve each of

the major public issues and management concerns. Planning Questions address the appropriate role of the Forest in providing dispersed, developed, and winter sports recreation, wilderness, wildlife habitat, grazing, and water. They further address management of tree resources, transportation systems, cultural resources, minerals, and land uses on the Forest. A more detailed discussion of Planning Questions can be found beginning on page II-37 of the Forest Plan and on page I-6 of the final Environmental Impact Statement. The expected future conditions of the Forest as it relates to each planning question is discussed beginning on page II-37 of the Land and Resource Management Plan.

Issues, concerns, and management opportunities identified at the beginning of this planning process did not substantially change during public review of the proposed Forest Plan and draft EIS, and no new issues were presented.

DECISION

I have reviewed the environmental consequences of the San Juan National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and the alternatives to the Plan which were disclosed in the final Environmental Impact Statement. I have also reviewed the public issues and management concerns identified during the scoping process for this Plan. These issues and concerns are listed in Chapter I of the EIS.

Additionally, I have given particular attention to public comments on the draft EIS presented in Chapter VI of the final EIS. The planning actions described in the 1979 NFMA regulations (36 CFR 219.5) have been completed and are properly documented.

Consequently, it is my decision to approve Alternative H as described in the final EIS as the Forest Plan for the San Juan National Forest.

The management direction to be followed under this decision is fully described in Chapter III of the Forest Plan document.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

This section describes the significant considerations forming the basis for my decisions in the Forest Plan. These considerations were derived from the issues, concerns, and opportunities identified through the planning process as well as from public comments relating to the draft EIS and proposed Forest Plan (Chapter VI of the final EIS).

Results of many planning decisions will not be readily apparent to the casual observer since planned levels of many outputs and activities are similar to those produced in the past. More apparent will be results from activities such as seasonal or year-long road closures and increased management in aspen and oak types. Still other results will occur over the long-term through vegetation treatment. These changes will be subtle and, in many cases, will not be discernable to the average Forest visitor. Such changes include increased forage production, greater vegetation diversity, increased water yield, reduced fire

hazard, and higher timber production. Considerations forming the basis for my decisions in and relating to the Forest Plan are as follows:

Resolution of Public Issues and Management Concerns

Public issues and management concerns, and the process by which these were developed into twelve planning questions were all discussed above. Alternatives were subsequently evaluated as to how favorably they respond to each planning question, and this, in turn, indicates how well they contributed to the resolution of public issues and management concerns covering a wide range of resource management and development activities.

Each alternative represents, to at least some degree, a favorable response to each of the twelve planning questions. For example, each alternative provides some developed and dispersed recreation opportunities, some wilderness, and some vegetation treatment to maintain or enhance wildlife habitat, livestock forage and a healthy tree resource.

Four alternatives, however, stand out as contributing most favorably to resolving the greatest number of issues and concerns. Alternatives B, G, H and J provide a moderate to high degree of favorable response to each of the twelve planning questions. Therefore, these four alternatives have the greatest capability for resolution of issues and concerns.

Stability of Local Industry

Alternatives were evaluated as to their ability to provide levels of outputs sufficient to maintain a stable industry base as well as meet Regional Guide output and activity assignments. Four elements were assessed: three addressing stability of major industries (timber, livestock, and recreation) and one addressing attainment of RPA objectives. With respect to stability in the timber industry, Alternatives E, F, and H are the most favorable because of relatively constant incremental growth in timber outputs. With respect to range stability, Alternatives B, C, F, G, H, and J are favorable also because they provide relatively constant, incremental increases in grazing outputs over time, resulting in high output levels by the end of the planning period. All alternatives are considered favorable with respect to stability in the recreation industry because recreation output levels exceed anticipated demand. All alternatives except Alternatives A, D, and I are considered favorable with respect to meeting Regional Guide assignments, with most output levels falling within 10 percent of targets.

In summary, all alternatives except Alternatives A and I provide outputs and activities at levels sufficient to maintain a stable industry base in the economic impact area. Alternative H is actually the most preferred when all four of the elements related to this criterion are considered.

Quality of Water and Plant and Animal Diversity

In order to determine which alternatives provide the highest water quality and contribute most favorably toward achieving plant and animal diversity, the following factors were considered: the degree to which water quality would be met while increasing water yield; how much plant diversity would be achieved through vegetation treatment; and how well animal habitat would be improved and protected.

All alternatives contribute positively to these factors to some degree. However, Alternatives E and H improve water quality and animal habitat to a high degree, and plant diversity to a moderate degree; Alternative F provides a high degree of plant diversity and improved habitat and a moderate improvement of water quality. None of the other alternatives provide such favorable contributions to all factors; therefore, Alternatives E, F, and H clearly contribute the most toward the improvement and protection of water quality, plant and animal diversity, and animal habitat.

Cost-Efficiency

Cost-efficiency, as indicated by present net value (PNV), was calculated for each alternative. Present net value is the difference between the incremental discounted benefits of goods and services produced and the incremental discounted costs of management. Ranking alternatives by PNV indicates that Alternative D has the highest, and Alternative H has the second highest present net value of all alternatives (with PNV's of \$337.9 and \$306.8 million respectively under a four percent discount rate). Because of an inability to quantify in dollar terms certain costs and benefits, for example, lower environmental quality, PNV can only serve as an indicator, rather than a true expression of overall economic efficiency. Since Alternative D, which is a "reduced budget" alternative, would have a relatively high proportion of these unquantifiable costs, it cannot be definitely stated whether Alternative D or H has the highest overall economic efficiency.

Community Stability

Factors considered in analyzing alternatives with respect to community stability include changes in work routines, availability of support services, population, wages, employment, effects on minorities, and payments to local governments and the U.S. Treasury. Several of these factors were quantified, and specific consideration was given to impacts relating to the agriculture, logging/sawmilling, and tourism sectors. Alternatives B, E, H, and J have the greatest positive effect on both income and employment in the Region, thus contributing to community stability in that regard. However, the rapid increases in outputs under Alternative B may actually detract from community stability rather than enhance it. Alternatives E, H, and J emerge as most preferable from the standpoint of income and employment.

Alternatives B, H, and J have the highest returns to the U.S. Treasury as well as the highest payments to counties in index year 1995.

Therefore, Alternatives H and J are most preferable with respect to contributions to community stability.

Compatibility with Other Agency Goals

Through the scoping and public involvement processes, various plans, goals, and concerns of other local, state, and federal agencies were identified, and alternatives were evaluated as to their compatibility with these factors. Although no alternative perfectly enhances all the goals set by all other agencies, all alternatives do generally support and enhance the overall missions of these agencies. Alternatives C, E, G, and H emerge as most favorable with respect to this general criterion. Alternative E is most compatible with goals of state and federal agencies, Alternative H is most compatible with concerns of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and Alternative G is most compatible with concerns of local and county governments.

Air, Soil, and Visual Quality

Alternatives were evaluated with respect to five separate environmental quality factors: air quality, likelihood of temporary air quality degradation, erosion potential, watershed improvement, and visual quality. The estimated effects on overall air quality were considered negligible for all alternatives. The likelihood of temporary air quality degradation was considered lowest in Alternatives A and I, and highest in Alternatives B, F, and J. The remaining alternatives, including Alternative H, would have moderate likelihood of temporary air quality degradation resulting from prescribed burning and fugitive dust from roads.

With respect to soil productivity, Alternatives A, C, and I would have the least potential erosion, and Alternatives B and J the greatest potential. The remaining alternatives, including Alternative H, would have moderate potential for soil erosion. Another factor related to soil quality is in the area of watershed improvement. Alternatives B, C, D, E, and G have the most average annual acreage of watershed improvement while Alternatives H and J have slightly less acreage.

With respect to visual quality, alternatives were evaluated based on the area in various Visual Quality Objective categories. Alternatives A, C, and E contribute most to visual quality in this regard, and Alternatives F, H, and I contribute slightly less.

In summary, all alternatives would maintain high standards of environmental quality with respect to air, soil, and visual quality, with Alternatives A, C, E, and I best meeting the overall criterion. Alternatives D, G, and H would only be slightly less preferable with respect to this criterion.

Energy Efficiency

Some alternatives are more energy-efficient than others in that they require less energy to produce and utilize the goods and services they

provide. To evaluate this efficiency, a ratio was established between each alternative's total energy requirement in British Thermal Units (BTU's) and its discounted benefit figure in dollars.

Alternatives B and J required the most energy per dollar of discounted benefits and were therefore the least energy-efficient of all the alternatives. All of the remaining alternatives require considerably less energy than do B and J, and thus appear to fall within a reasonable and acceptable range of efficiency. All alternatives except B and J are therefore considered energy-efficient.

Summary of Reasons for Selecting Alternative H

Although the eight criteria discussed above were identified early in the planning process, they still adequately represent existing public issues and management concerns. Alternative H is overall the most favorable as it appears in the group of most preferred alternatives with respect to seven out of the eight criteria discussed. The next most favorable, Alternative E, appears in the group of most preferred alternatives with respect to only four of the eight criteria. Additional factors lending further weight to the selection of Alternative H are that it recommends two out of three Wilderness Study Areas as suitable for wilderness designation while still maintaining relatively high levels of forest outputs within reasonable and foreseeable budgets. Furthermore, Alternative H has a relatively high proportion of area managed for increased water yield, and makes widespread use of vegetation treatment to achieve multiple resource objectives. Although Alternative H has a lower present net value (PNV) than Alternative D (\$306.8 compared to \$337.9 million discounted at four percent), the additional non-quantifiable benefits of Alternative H, including many of those discussed above, exceed the opportunity costs of the PNV foregone.

DECISION PROCESS

The decision process began with the initial identification of public issues and management concerns as discussed earlier. These issues and concerns along with applicable laws and regulations and additional public participation led to formulation of the alternatives that were considered in detail in the draft EIS. The formulation process used to develop alternatives is outlined beginning on page II-4 of the final EIS. Comments on the proposed Plan and draft EIS were an important part of the decision process and formulated the basis for many of the changes made between the draft and final EIS and Plan. Other changes in the formulation and analysis of alternatives were made in response to revised federal regulations governing land and resource management planning (issued September 30, 1982).

Changes Between the Draft and Final EIS

Various modifications were made between the proposed Plan and draft EIS and the final documents. Minor changes resulting from analysis refinements are reflected in the tables of both planning documents. Following is a description of the major changes.

Management area prescriptions in the draft EIS were developed to direct specific management activities on similar land types as well as achieve desired management objectives. Following publication of draft documents, the need to develop uniform prescriptions across the Region became apparent. Uniform prescriptions were designed to facilitate management as well as enhance public understanding by highlighting similarities and differences between Forests through consistent use of terminology. The final EIS and accompanying Forest Plan are expressed in terms of uniform prescriptions modified to address the local situation, whereas the draft documents were expressed in terms of prescriptions formulated at the Forest level.

Three general changes in the planning analysis were made in relation to benchmarks, first decade outputs and costs, and total budget estimates for the alternatives. All three of these analytical changes affected the cost-efficiency analysis of alternatives, resulting in a different ranking of alternatives by present net value.

The draft EIS contained an analysis of eight alternatives considered in detail. Following publication of the draft EIS, two additional alternatives (Alternatives I and J) were formulated and analyzed in response to public comments as well as revised internal analysis requirements.

Several other changes were made in the content of the Forest Plan and EIS documents, many of which are the result of either public comments or an identified need to add resource-specific information for clarification. Individual resource sections in Chapter IV of the EIS have been expanded to include a discussion of the effects of managing for a specific resource on other resources and programs.

In response to a perceived general misunderstanding of the role of commercial timber harvests in meeting Forest-wide goals and objectives for management of other resources, the final documents now contain an explanation of the role of vegetation treatment in achieving and maintaining healthy forest conditions. There is also a discussion of how this can be done through "commercial" timber harvests as well as through "non-commercial" methods. A vegetation section has been added to Chapters III and IV of the EIS and a discussion of vegetation treatment added to the various resource sections where appropriate.

The discussions of timber, recreation, minerals, water, and other resources have been expanded in response to public comments expressing disagreement with statements made or actions proposed, or as a result of perceived misunderstanding of the rationale behind management activities. Resource allocations have been modified somewhat following publication of the proposed Plan, the most significant change being the application of a water yield prescription to approximately 39,000 acres. The discussion of mitigation measures and environmental effects has been expanded for all resources to better portray the inter-relationships between resources and management.

Alternatives Considered in Detail

Ten alternatives were considered in detail in the final EIS. These alternatives are briefly described as follows:

Alternative A - This alternative emphasizes opportunities to provide a variety of non-market outputs. These are outputs for which traditional buying and selling markets do not exist, including water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, dispersed recreation, wilderness, and visual quality. In this alternative, vegetation treatment is directed mainly towards producing quality wildlife habitat and enhancing visual quality while still providing minimally acceptable levels of market outputs needed to maintain social and economic stability in the economic impact area of the Forest. The South San Juan Wilderness Expansion, West Needle, and Piedra Wilderness Study Areas would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. This alternative is similar to Alternative I, which has the same philosophy, but which is not constrained to produce minimally acceptable levels of timber and livestock forage.

Alternative B - This alternative emphasizes production of market outputs which have the potential to produce income to the United States Treasury. These are mainly timber, livestock forage, public developed recreation, and downhill skiing. Although this alternative has a philosophy similar to Alternative J, it has somewhat higher timber output levels and lower water quality. Vegetation treatment would be directed toward improving range conditions, increasing timber production, and improving water yield. Market outputs would be produced at levels commensurate with the highest perceived levels of demand. Although emphasis is on market commodities, non-market outputs would be produced at levels indicated by cost-efficiency analysis and joint-production relationships. The West Needle, Piedra, and South San Juan Expansion Wilderness Study Areas would be recommended as unsuitable for wilderness designation.

Alternative C - This alternative emphasizes a mixture of market and non-market outputs, which would be achieved through modest increases in livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, skier capacity, wilderness, and visual quality. Dispersed and developed recreation capacity, timber volume, and water yield outputs would all be maintained at fairly constant levels. Vegetation treatment would be used to accomplish a wide variety of objectives for both market and non-market outputs. The West Needle Wilderness Study Area would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation; the Piedra and South San Juan Expansion Wilderness Study Areas would be recommended as unsuitable.

Alternative D - Alternative D is a "reduced cost" alternative which emphasizes producing market outputs such as timber, livestock grazing, and mineral resources under reduced administrative regulation and reduction in budget levels ranging from approximately 15 to 25 percent over the first five decades. This would be achieved by producing a mix of market and non-market outputs with strong emphasis placed on coordinating vegetation treatments to accomplish a variety of resource

objectives with minimum additional costs and maximum efficiency. The West Needle, Piedra and South San Juan Expansion Wilderness Study Areas would be recommended as unsuitable for wilderness designation. Because of the reduction in administrative oversight and regulation under this alternative, the risk of environmental degradation would be relatively high. Low levels of expenditures for such items as road and trail maintenance would result in lower quality recreation experiences, as well as more rapid depreciation of capital investments, including roads, trails, campgrounds, bridges, and buildings.

Alternative E - Alternative E is the "RPA" Alternative. It was formulated to meet Regional goals for the Forest as described in the Rocky Mountain Regional Guide which disaggregates to the Forest its portion of the 1980 Resources Planning Act (RPA) Program targets. This emphasis would be achieved by managing all resources at high levels while still meeting Forest Direction for resource protection. Resource outputs having no specific targets established in the RPA Program would be produced at least at minimally acceptable levels. The West Needle and Piedra Wilderness Study Areas would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation; the South San Juan Wilderness Expansion Study Area would be recommended as unsuitable.

Alternative F - Alternative F is a continuation of current management direction. It would continue the present course of action and be guided by the goals, objectives and land use allocations established in existing plans, with modifications made to meet and respond to present and projected program levels and consumptive demands. This is the required "no action" alternative which provides a basis for comparison with other alternatives. Vegetation treatment would be used to accomplish a wide variety of resource objectives including those relating to timber production, water yield, and wildlife and livestock forage. All three Wilderness Study Areas would be managed under existing direction in accordance with the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-560) so as to maintain wilderness character and potential.

Alternative G - This alternative emphasizes production of market outputs including timber, livestock grazing, and mineral resources, while increasing wilderness acreage. It has the same land use allocation as Alternative D, except for the status of the three Wilderness Study Areas, all of which would be recommended as suitable for wilderness classification. Although emphasis is on market outputs, an acceptable mix of market and non-market outputs would be produced, and vegetation treatments would be coordinated to produce this mix whenever possible.

Alternative H - Alternative H emphasizes the market outputs of timber, livestock grazing and developed recreation, while slightly increasing water yield, dispersed recreation, wildlife habitat, visual quality, and mineral resources. Opportunities would be provided for increasing downhill skier capacity and wilderness area. The West Needle and Piedra Wilderness Study Areas would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation; the South San Juan Wilderness Expansion Study Area would be recommended as unsuitable. Coordination of vegetation treatments would be strongly emphasized to produce the estimated levels of both market and non-market outputs that characterize this alternative.

Alternative I - This alternative is an "output" alternative, which emphasizes production of non-market outputs and amenity values. Non-market outputs, those for which traditional buying and selling markets do not exist, include water quality, fish, wildlife, dispersed recreation, wilderness, and visual quality. The South San Juan Expansion, West Needle, and Piedra Wilderness Study Areas would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The market outputs of timber, livestock forage, and developed recreation would be produced in this alternative, but only at levels indicated by cost-efficiency and joint production relationships. No minimum levels for protection of dependent industry were established, although a non-declining yield of timber would be produced. Requirements of existing laws and regulations will be met.

Alternative I has generally the same philosophy as Alternative A, except that Alternative I does not have minimum levels established for market outputs. This alternative was not in the draft EIS, but was developed in response to public comments regarding the need to formulate and analyze an alternative that emphasizes non-market outputs but that is not constrained by the levels of market outputs needed by local established industries.

Alternative J - This alternative is an "output" alternative which emphasizes production of market outputs having the potential to produce income to the United States Treasury. These include timber, livestock forage, public developed recreation, and downhill skiing. This alternative is not limited by budget and meets all minimum standards established in existing laws and regulations. Vegetation treatments will be directed towards improving range conditions and increasing timber production. Coordination of treatment activities will be made to increase water yield, improve wildlife habitat and enhance visual quality, but only to the extent that opportunities to produce market outputs are not foregone. The West Needle, Piedra, and South San Juan Expansion Wilderness Study Areas would be recommended as unsuitable for wilderness designation. This alternative was not in the draft EIS but was formulated in response to public comments expressing the need to consider levels of timber harvest between the highest and second highest levels in the draft EIS.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

All alternatives are environmentally acceptable. On the basis of effects on only biological and physical factors, Alternatives A and I appear to be the most favorable environmentally. However, based on consideration of the total human environment, including social and economic factors, Alternative H produces the highest net public benefits and is therefore favored as the environmentally preferable alternative.

Alternative H is favored because it provides additional economic opportunities for dependent industries relating to timber, range, and recreation; provides a continuous flow of Forest outputs which complement the social environment of local communities; and provides a biological setting which improves water quality and fish and wildlife

habitat to a high degree. The potential for temporary air quality degradation, soil erosion, and adverse temporary effects on visual quality are slightly higher than in some of the other less management intensive alternatives. These impacts, however, are short-lived and are well within environmental tolerances.

Public Participation

A Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) was published in the Federal Register on July 9, 1979. A revised Notice of Intent was published on November 14, 1980. Notice of Availability of the draft EIS was published in the Federal Register on July 15, 1982, and announced by the news media throughout the San Juan area. Over 1,000 copies of the proposed Plan and draft EIS and 2,500 copies of the summary of these documents were distributed during the comment period. The public comment period lasted through October 15, 1982, and included open houses, numerous media reports and interviews, formal public hearings on the three Wilderness Study Areas, as well as many meetings between Forest Officers and groups and individuals.

A total of 429 letters and oral comments were received from individuals, organizations, companies, and federal, state, and local government agencies. All comments have been considered in preparation of the final documents. Additional and more specific information concerning public participation and involvement may be found in Chapter VI of the final EIS.

Planning Records

All of the supporting documents and files that chronicle the Forest planning and EIS process are available for inspection at the San Juan National Forest Supervisor's Office, Durango, Colorado, during regular business hours. Planning Actions are documents which contain the detailed information and decisions used in developing the Forest Plan and EIS as required in 36 CFR 219.5(b) through (k) (1979) and 40 CFR 1502.10. The Planning Actions are incorporated by reference at appropriate points in the text and appendices of the Environmental Impact Statement and Forest Plan. The Planning Actions are available for review at the Supervisor's Office and the five Ranger Districts.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The purpose of the monitoring program is two-fold: (1) to evaluate whether Forest goals and objectives are being realized, and (2) to determine how closely management requirements have been followed [36 CFR 219.12(k)].

The monitoring program is described in detail in Chapter IV of the Forest Plan. At intervals established in the monitoring program, it will be determined if the management objectives have been met and how closely management requirements have been followed. The results of monitoring and evaluation will be used to measure the progress of the

Plan implementation and these results will also help to determine when Plan amendments or revisions are needed.

The San Juan National Forest Plan will not be implemented sooner than 30 days after the Notice of Availability of the EIS and Record of Decision appears in the Federal Register. The time needed to bring all activities into compliance with the Forest Plan will vary depending on the type of project. Most operation and maintenance activities, projects in the first year of development, new special use proposals, and transfers of existing permits can be brought into compliance with the Plan within the first year of implementation. Existing projects as well as contractual obligations will continue as planned. During implementation, however, the following minimum requirements, subject to valid existing rights, will be met: the Forest Supervisor will assure that (1) annual program proposals and projects are consistent with the Plan; (2) program budget proposals and objectives are consistent with management direction specified in the Plan; and (3) implementation is in compliance with the Regional Guide and 36 CFR 219.10(e), 36 CFR 219.11(d), and 36 CFR 219.27.

Implementation and monitoring are guided by the management requirements contained in the Forest Direction and prescriptions for Management Areas, which are found in Chapter III of the Forest Plan. These management requirements were developed in an interdisciplinary manner, and provide mitigating measures designed to mitigate or eliminate any long-term adverse effects. Any residual, unavoidable adverse environmental effects, such as the disruptive effect of timber harvest on recreation or livestock grazing, will be temporary and will involve only a small percentage of the Forest at any one time. To the best of my knowledge, all practical mitigation measures have been adopted and are included in Chapter III of the Forest Plan.

Any proposal to use National Forest System (NFS) lands will be reviewed for consistency with the Forest Plan. Management Direction contained in Chapter III of the Plan will be used in analyzing any proposal by a Forest user involving use of NFS lands. All permits, contracts, and other instruments for occupancy and use of the NFS lands must be consistent with the Management Direction in Chapter III. This is required by 16 USC 1604(i) and 36 CFR 219.10(e).

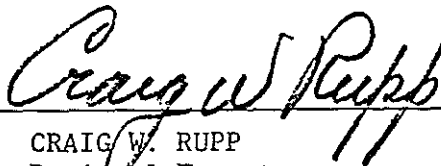
RIGHT TO ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 211.18. (Federal Register, Vol. 48, No. 63, March 31, 1983, pages 13420 to 13426). Notice of appeal must be in writing and submitted to Craig Rupp, Regional Forester, Rocky Mountain Region, USDA Forest Service, 11177 W. 8th Avenue, Lakewood, Colorado 80225, within 45 days from the date of this decision. A statement of reasons to support the appeal and any request for oral presentation must be filed within the 45-day period for filing a notice of appeal.

The right to administrative review is not applicable to Wilderness Study Area recommendations. I will recommend the West Needle and Piedra Wilderness Study Areas as suitable and the South San Juan Wilderness

Expansion Study Area as unsuitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. These recommendations will receive further review and possible modification in the offices of the Chief of the Forest Service, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the President of the United States. The President will transmit the Administration's final recommendations to Congress. Final decisions on wilderness designation have been reserved by Congress.

These are recommendations in response to a legislative mandate in PL 96-560 and are not appealable under 36 CFR 211.18. The existing wilderness character of the areas and their potential for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System will be maintained as provided for in Section 105(c) of PL 96-560.



CRAIG W. RUPP
Regional Forester

SEP 29 1983

Date